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ABSTRACT

This report calls for continual self-evaluation of community colleges to ensure that educational objectives--including knowledge, skills and attitudinal goals--are being met. Faculty and curriculum development must be ongoing, although there is debate over whether it should be proactive or reactive regarding societal changes. Whichever philosophy is adopted, updates through quality approaches in inservice education are essential, and this paper outlines possible methods of faculty improvement. Community college instructors should facilitate creative thought among their students and colleagues, and offers methods for improving instructor performance, such as video taping classes, observing fellow instructors, and viewing video tapes on providing vocational training. Improvements needed in colleges include the use of technology, the use of interactive media, the education and assistance for students of all cultures and disabilities, and transformational quality and leadership. Suggestions include instructors periodically forming committees and divisional meetings to determine if their syllabi need revising and to determine the core content for each discipline. From these core contents arise statements of objectives, which become increasingly complex as the students progress. Communication between public schools and community colleges would facilitate the transition from one framework to the other. Contains 20 references. (VF)

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Inservice Education at the Community College

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INSERVICE EDUCATION IN THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

All professions need to assess their present status and determine what needs to be changed in order to provide the best services possible to consumers. Community colleges, too, must evaluate where they are presently in the total educational program and then move in the direction to what should be. This involves a continual appraisal of the quality of educational programs offered in a community college. Objectives emphasizing knowledge, skills, and attitudinal goals for student achievement need to be updated. Adequate resources in terms of library holdings and other materials of instruction need to be available so that these objectives can be attained. A quality and comprehensive evaluation system needs to be in the offing to determine if the objectives are being realized by community college students (Ediger, 1999, Chapter One).

Faculty development must be ongoing in the community college. There are continual changes in the societal arena and the curriculum needs to incorporate positive changes. Otherwise, the community college curriculum might well become outdated. Selected educators state that the community college, along with other institutions of higher education and learning, should take the lead in improving the societal arena and not reflect the positive in society only. Thus the community college may be proactive or reactive in curriculum development. Whichever philosophical point of view that is taken, the community college faculty and administration must be updated through quality approaches in inservice education. This paper will zero in on faculty development and improvement which might well include administrative leadership (Ediger, 1999, Chapter 29).

Faculty Inservice Education in the Community College

Instructors need to engage in self appraisal continuously. There are numerous facets of self appraisal. The instructor may desire to evaluate course objectives presently being emphasized. These

objectives must emphasize relevant knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Trivia and outdated objectives need to be eliminated. Careful analysis of each objective stressed in teaching and learning must pass scrutiny in terms of being salient and utilitarian. Skills objectives should emphasize using the knowledge that has been acquired. Application goals are then being stressed in ongoing lessons and units of instruction. Skills of critical and creative thinking as well as problem solving are always useful in school and in society. Whatever is done requires critical thought in that individuals make comparisons and contrasts as well as separate the accurate from the inaccurate, facts from opinions, and reality from that which is fictional. Reflecting upon what was done or read also requires critical thinking.

Creative thinking emphasizes originality, the new, and the novel. Progress in education and in society many times comes from those who come up with modified or new ways of knowing, doing, and feeling. Community college instructors should provide ample opportunities for students to achieve in the area of creative thought.

Problem solving may incorporate critical and creative thinking. To engage in problem solving, instructors need to guide students to identify significant problem areas.. These problems are identified in context, that is within the framework of the ongoing lesson presentation. Data or information is acquired to solve the problem area, a hypothesis results in answer to the problem, and the hypothesis is tested and revised as necessary.

The attitudinal dimension of objectives for student attainment results from success, satisfaction, achievement, and sequential progress of the learners in the community college curriculum.

Arthur H. Cohen (1993) emphasizes the importance of a general education program which stresses the nonvocational courses in the community college curriculum. He believes that a present day general education curriculum should place much importance on gender equity, ethnic studies, and global education which previous curricula had slighted. The Great Books could be a part of the general education

community college offerings. Increased integration of subject matter should be inherent in curriculum revision. A problem, however, exists in that there are so many separate units and departments offering general education. Thus complexity is in evidence when the different departments and units plan together in attempting to relate subject matter taught in community college course work.

Faculty inservice education might well be emphasized in a planned series of meetings whereby instructors in involved course work would attempt to integrated subject matter from relevant courses. Faculty members in committee settings should view their own syllabi and study guides for students, to determine if updating and revisions need to be made of content taught. Adequate reference sources must be available to guide faculty in decision making. Leadership is necessary to stimulate and guide faculty to modify and revise as need be in the objectives, learning opportunities, and appraisal procedures stressed in each course.

(Don Cohen- Editor-- 1993) writes about "Standards for Curriculum and Pedagogical Reform in Two Year College and Lower Division Mathematics," developed by their Task Force. The Task Force in making recommendations focused on core content for community college students to achieve in mathematics. The core would consist of number, symbol, geometric, function, probability and statistics, and problem solving sense. Standards for students and faculty in mathematics are discussed.

Faculty need to identify vital content for student attainment as well as goals for faculty to achieve in teaching-learning situations. Core content of any discipline provides the framework for understanding an academic discipline. (Bruner 1968) was an early advocate of mathematicians, among others, identifying structural ideas that all students should achieve. These key ideas or core content would serve as a guide for developing statements of objectives for learners to attain. These structural ideas would be emphasized at increasingly levels of complexity as students progress to higher levels of attainment. Thus

there would be agreement by mathematicians in terms of what is vital for students to achieve in mathematics. Bruner emphasized an inductive procedure of learning due to professional mathematicians also attaining subject matter inductively. The National Council Teachers of Mathematics (1989) identified a set of standards or objectives for pupils to achieve in the school setting in their publication Curriculum and Evaluation Standards for School Mathematics. Here is another example of mathematicians being involved in determining what is vital for learners to achieve in the curriculum. These objectives might well be perceived as representing a core of facts, concepts, and generalizations for learners to attain within the framework of critical and creative thinking as well as problem solving.

Cooperative endeavors between the public schools and community colleges would be excellent in terms of developing quality sequence for students in mathematics, and other academic and non- academic areas when progressing from the secondary to the higher education levels of instruction. With cooperatively developed goals, faculty may assist students to achieve more optimally. The identified goals should represent the best thinking of involved academicians and instructors/teachers within the framework of a planned series of meetings arranged to achieve salient objectives. Proper articulation and sequence between secondary and higher education levels of instruction has been minimized too frequently. Conscientious efforts should be inherent to remedy this situation.

Schertz (1993) describes an effort to internationalize Illinois Community College at Peoria with funds from a successfully written federal grant. A workshop resulted in which involved faculty developed courses pertaining to third world cultures. Three new courses resulted: China, Meso- America, and West Africa. There were challenges involved in achieving the goal of these developed courses. These included influencing the dean on the importance of these courses; having adequate faculty in designing the new courses; money for staff development, and securing college moneys for the new courses.

Ediger (1996) presents a model for conducting a workshop. The first step should involve establishing a theme. Ideally all members of the workshop need to assist in choosing a theme. There must be adequate human, reading, material, and audiovisual aids available for the workshop. The rest of the workshop needs to be flexible and open ended. All participants participate in the general session. Here, the members select relevant problem areas to solve. Careful deliberation is necessary so that vital problem areas are chosen. Participants need to perceive purpose in each. The problems may pertain to adopting new courses or modifying course content. Objectives in the curriculum may be selected, revised, or deleted. New assessment procedures may be explored and studied.

Within this workshop, participants may volunteer to work on a problem with the goal being to offer viable solutions. Here resources and reference materials should be used. Each committee needs to provide progress reports to the other committees. This can be done with printed documents or oral reports. Participants should volunteer to serve on the committee which possesses the most perceived purpose. Beyond the general session and committee endeavors, individual projects and activities become salient. Each participant has a selected problem to solve or an area of interest to pursue. The individual may wish to share findings with others, Workshops can be an excellent way of opening doors for open communication and the solving of problems.

Divisional meetings are and can be quality ways of improving the curriculum and offer inservice education. An agenda should be available prior to each meeting. Participants should have ample opportunities to study and analyze agenda items, prior to the workshop. Improved quality in interaction among division members is possible when members have time to think through and come up with ideas for change in the curriculum. Each faculty member should have chances to submit items for the agenda. Important agenda items should be covered only, not trivia. Committees, as needed, may be arranged to work on problems, designed by all faculty in the divisional meeting. Ideally,

members should serve on the committee which has the most perceived purpose for the participant. A high degree of purpose involved in working on a committee makes for increased energy levels as well as for desiring to carry the work forward until necessary solutions to problems are agreed upon. Reference and resources should be available to assist participants to grow, develop, and achieve. Divisional meetings have as their goal the improvement of the community college curriculum. All items discussed within a committee or the division as a whole must guide participants to become increasingly professional in their duties and responsibilities. (Ediger 1995).

Marlene Cohen (1992) discusses changes that were implemented in Prince George's Community College in Maryland after the results of a survey of 149 of its adjunct faculty members. These changes included the offering of orientation sessions each semester for new faculty members as well as have more faculty workshops. The survey results also indicated developing a handbook for adjunct faculty and honoring an adjunct faculty member each year for outstanding work.

Greive and France (1992) present guidelines in conducting a workshop for new and experienced adjunct faculty. These guidelines resulted in a manual containing workshop and college information, instructional concerns, student traits and concerns, and characteristics of good teaching, among other items.

Kelly (1991-1992) describes an inservice education program for adjunct faculty on teaching adult learners at Fullerton College in California. The faculty involved experienced discussions and implementation of new teaching methods. Pertaining to questionnaire results from students of the implemented ideas of instruction, the involved students felt an excess amount of time was required for completing course work. There was a need to guide adult evening students in time management, according to questionnaire results. Students did feel positive toward the courses, teachers, and methods of instruction used.

There is a need to stress inservice education for all community

college instructors. The curriculum offered to students needs to be analyzed continuously with needed modifications and changes made. The objectives of instruction need scrutinizing in terms of being relevant, salient, and vital. Rational balance should be made in stressing knowledge, skills, and attitudinal ends of instruction.

Learning opportunities for students to attain objectives should stress a multimedia approach such as using textbooks, audio-visual aids, library resources, reference personnel, and independent studies. Quality sequence of learning opportunities is a must so that each student might attain more optimally.

Appraisal of student achievement should analyze if students have achieved the stated goals of instruction. Evaluative procedures may include instructor written tests (multiple choice, true-false, matching, completion/short answer, and essay). Additional techniques of evaluation might well involve anecdotal records, checklists, rating scales, case studies, discussions, and journal writing. Port folios have become increasingly important in the evaluative process. The portfolio contains a representative sampling of student course work which may be shown to potential employees upon being interviewed.

Additional Methods of Inservice Education

There are numerous other means of emphasizing faculty development. Thus, faculty individually may video tape their own teaching performance. The video taped performance is then available for an involved peer to assist in appraising actual teaching and learning. The peer chosen to appraise should be one that the instructor who did the actual teaching on video tape feels comfortable with. An agreed upon set of standards can be emphasized in appraising the video taped teaching. The following appear to be salient standards:

1. Do students in class appear to understand and attach meaning to what is being taught?

2. Is the lesson presentation paced at a speed which is conducive to student learning ?

3. Does the instructor sequence or order learning activities which optimalize student learning?

4. Do students raise relevant questions and offer vital comments directly related to the ongoing presentation?

5. Are students motivated to achieve and attain?

6. Does the instructor use a variety of learning activities so that students maintain interest in learning? A multimedia approach should be emphasized.

7. Do students receive worthwhile feedback from test and other evaluative results?

8. Is the instructor stressing diverse methodology of instruction to encourage active involvement by students such as using inductive teaching, problem solving, creative and critical thinking, and discovery methods of learning?

9. Does the instructor take time to guide students to perceive purpose in learning?

10. Do students provide feedback to the instructor on the quality of instruction being offered? A checklist or rating scale may be devised by instructors and used by students to evaluate different facets of instruction (Ediger,1996, 3-25).

There are numerous means of improving instruction through video taping an instructor's teaching and evaluating the results there from. Improved instruction should be an end result. More than one peer could also assist in appraising the quality of instruction.

Community college instructors might visit the classrooms of others who are known to do an excellent job of teaching students. It is good if different community colleges in an area could arrange times for instructors to observe high quality models of instruction. The instructional sites chosen as models must have teaching which emulates the best in community college teaching. Following the observational

visit, the instructor and the observer should discuss and analyze what transpired in an ongoing lesson. The observer should discuss with the instructor what may be implemented in the former's instructional situation. An improved curriculum for students should be an end result. Pirozzoli (1993) emphasized that in an age of accountability, better prepared students are expected from higher education graduates. The experiences of the student are an important area of restructuring the curriculum.

In addition to visiting an excellent model of teaching in a community college, instructors may view video tapes of community college instruction. The video tape may be produced locally or ordered from a publishing company. Here, several instructors might observe the video tape and critique the observations made in terms of quality standards. The standards might have been developed from faculty research involving what good teaching is in the community college. Each participant may discuss what can be used in his/her classroom from the observations made. Recommendations should also be made on how to improve teaching-learning situations that need change, as observed from the video tape.

A video tape on retraining displaced workers might well provide excellent content in times of job losses and retrenchment in the economic world. Bogaty et. al. (1994) emphasize that community colleges may play a leading role in retraining workers. In their detailed report, they recommended seven elements be included in worker retraining programs, including applied learning, technology use, cooperative learning, integration of course content, team teaching, learning labs, and adequate integrated student services.

In Conclusion

Community colleges need to keep abreast of the latest positive trends to offer a quality curriculum for all students. Phelps (1994) wrote the following:

Determining how the nations nearly 1,300 community colleges

should proceed toward the 21st century need not be an overwhelming task if we begin using new and improved methods of selecting data to build a more cogent case for what we need to do. We need techniques to demonstrate quality, accountability, and outcomes that are easily discernible and readily available to the various publics involved. and above all, we must be willing to communicate with our various publics.

Whether addressing the economy, the welfare system, education, the heath care crisis, or crime and violence in our cities, people on the local level are going to have to play an ever greater role in solving the complex problems not only of our cities, but of our suburbs and rural communities as well.

Trends in teaching that need continual addressing include the following:

1. Teaching in the Community College needs to be transformed through the use of technology in its fullest dimensions (Doucette 1994).
2. Interactive Media and its uses should assist learners in community colleges to achieve vital objectives in the curriculum (Sheponik 1995).
3. Multicultural education needs incorporation and be updated continuously (Stoll 1994- 95).
4. Transformational quality and leadership are musts in the community college curriculum (Harris, April- May 1995).
5. Quality instruction and assistance for college students with disabilities need to be incorporated in the community college curriculum (Van Biervliet and Parette 267- 273).

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